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On the branch a medallion is inserted, which on the outer face pictures a Roman warrior, and on the reverse a violet plant, indicating that the sword-maker employed a die which had served in Napoleon's time—we recall, of course, that *Monsieur Violet* was a pet name for the emperor. The grip of the sabre is almost rectangular in section, made of rosewood, smooth on the edges, and shagreened on the sides by cross-hatching, in the fashion common in pistol grips of 1810 to 1830. The scabbard is of blued steel encased in brass mounts of extraordinary length, the lower end, or chape, enclosing three fifths of the entire scabbard. In fact, the scabbard itself is exposed for only one fifth of its length. The sword loops have spool-like bases of great size, enriched with roping, "pearls," and a notched border. The scabbard mounts, as shown in the figure, are decorated with stamped and chiseled ornaments, which include acanthus leaves, Greek honeysuckles, and husks, in Empire fashion.

Early American arms of artistic merit are rare, and the present specimen is a welcome addition to our collection. We like to picture it in a special vitrine beside other American swords of similar artistic merit and historical associations.

B. D.

## DRAWINGS BY DEGAS

THE most conspicuous lack in the Museum collection of modern pictures is the absence of any painting by Degas. His importance is no longer disputable; indeed, there are now but few who hesitate to place him in the company of the greatest French masters, whose characteristic virtues—strength of will, clarity, and conciseness—he exemplifies in such an undeniable fashion. The accusations of flippancy and cynicism that one formerly heard applied to him are now reversed by a cooler judgment, which recognizes the quality that called them forth as none other than his originality in choosing themes and types of his own time, before him unknown in painting. There are those who cannot forgive him his choice of subjects, but even they will be likely to approve the acquisi-

tion of the ten drawings by him which are shown this month in the Room of Recent Accessions. These are all portrait drawings with the exception of two which are studies from the nude.

They were bought in Paris in December, 1918, at a sale of his works left in the studio at his death, and bear the mark of this sale, a facsimile of his signature stamped in red. Three, the earliest of the group, still displaying the influence of the manner of Ingres, are portraits of Édouard Manet the painter. These are in lead pencil on slightly tinted paper. The one having an indication in the background of a lady with field-glasses to her eyes was evidently jotted down at the races that Degas and Manet often attended. The other two show Manet seated; in one, with his hat on his knees, he leans forward as though in interested conversation; in the other, with a combative expression he appears to be listening to some argument that he feels sure he can tear to pieces when his interlocutor has finished. The momentary mood is most clearly described in each of the sketches, particularly in the last two.

There are two portraits of ladies, in charcoal and pastel, inscribed with the names of the sitters, Mme. Loubens and Mme. Lisle, that are somewhat later in date than the drawings of Manet. The Violinist, a masterly and rapid pastel sketch in full color, is evidently a study made in preparation for one of his pictures of ballet girls practising.

The drawing of Duranty shows an extraordinary mastery of form and expression. The white light on the forehead apparently has more prominence than the artist intended, due doubtless to some change that has taken place in the colors; but beyond this the certainty of the line, the sureness of the modeling, the rendering of the textures, and the expression of character are things to wonder at. Examples of the excellence of the work can be chosen at random; the nervousness and structure of the hand against the face, for instance, or the way the sparse curly hair grows from the scalp; the determined mouth, half-hidden by the carelessly trimmed moustache, or the thoughtful eyes. This drawing and

the one above it, of papers on a library table with book shelves behind it, were studies for the Portrait of Duranty in his Library, dated 1879.

The figure in the painting is very much the same as in our drawing. Duranty is at his work table all but hidden by the reviews

a religion of realism. He was the editor of their mouthpiece, *Le Réalisme*, and besides was a novelist of note. His best book is *Le Malheur d'Henriette Gérard*, and his most charming, *Les Marionettes du Théâtre des Tuileries*. This is a work of his young manhood, a collection of little pieces



PORTRAIT OF ÉDOUARD MANET  
BY EDGAR DEGAS

and magazines which are piled pell-mell upon it. He is placed low in the canvas and back of him, filling its greater part, are rows upon rows of books. One feels, from the way they are stacked, that there is another row hidden back of those that one sees, and, looking at the earnest and capable head, one is sure that M. Duranty knew them all. Émile Duranty (1833-1880) was of the coterie who in the sixties made

of exuberant fancy that he composed for a Marionette Theatre in the Tuileries Gardens for which he had received a concession and which he manipulated himself, living for a time upon its earnings. He was an author of distinguished and original talent, and his character, as his likeness bears witness, was loyal and candid.

The two nudes are drawn in charcoal and lightly touched with color in pastel.

The drawing showing the full back of the woman leaning to one side and twisting the upper part of her body about as she dries her hip, is one of a series of studies of the same position, at least eight of these being in the sale at which our works were bought. The just and perfect expression of this complicated movement was what the artist was striving for, and in our example his success is astounding. The muscles of the back have exactly the salience that the effort requires; the line is taut or loose in nicest accord with the tenseness or sag of the flesh; the tactile values are superb. In the next moment her body will

swing back to its upright poise like a reed after the wind gust passes.

The other bather is of a like quality. Both are worthy of the most careful examination. One must go back to the great times of the Renaissance to find Degas' equals in the drawing of the nude. But his figures are far different from those of the old artists. They are not goddesses and there is nothing of the heroic about them; they are simply Parisian women, accustomed to corsets and tight shoes and paved streets, whom he has surprised at strange moments of their toilet.

B. B.



PORTRAIT OF ÉMILE DURANTY  
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